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Chairman

Teresa Leger de Fernandez
Vice Chairman

John M. Fowler
Executive Director



Preserving America's Heritage

June 17, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Dirksen Senate Office Building, SD-304
Washington, DC 20510-6150

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Dirksen Senate Office Building, SD-304
Washington, DC 20510-6150

Dear Senators Murkowski and Cantwell:

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) would like to express its support for the Preservation Research at Institutions Serving Minorities Act (PRISM Act). The bill was introduced in the Senate as S. 805 and has been included (with amendments) in the House of Representatives version of the comprehensive energy bill (S. 2012). Established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, the ACHP is the independent federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on matters relating to historic preservation. The members of the ACHP voted unanimously to support the PRISM Act. (As is usually the case when the Administration has not yet taken a position on a bill, federal agency members of the ACHP abstained.)

The NHPA authorizes the Department of the Interior to provide technical and/or financial assistance to historically black colleges and universities, to tribal colleges, and to colleges with a high enrollment of Native Americans or Native Hawaiians, to establish preservation training and degree programs. S. 805 would expand the eligibility to receive such assistance to include Hispanic-serving educational institutions. The version of the bill passed by the House as part of S. 2012 would expand the eligibility for assistance further to include universities and colleges serving Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The diversity of cultures in our country shapes and enriches the American experience, and changing demographics create opportunities as well as challenges for the national historic preservation program. The ACHP is working to encourage broader involvement and representation in determining what historic sites are worthy of recognition and preservation; how history and cultural heritage should be valued, interpreted, and preserved; and how we can ensure the American public as a whole can take advantage of the NHPA's programs and tools. Toward those goals, the ACHP supports the PRISM Act a step forward toward building a more inclusive national preservation program.

Please feel free to contact us if the ACHP can be of any assistance during further consideration of the PRISM Act. Our Executive Director, John Fowler, may be reached at (202) 517-0200.

Sincerely,

Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA
Chairman

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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